

"We are Brazilian by birth and Americans by choice, but we did it legally. We never demanded any rights because we didn't have any until we became U.S. citizens. We pay our taxes. We obey the law. We love America with its traditions and all it stands for, and we do not wish to see it destroyed or changed.

"It is with horror that I see thousands of illegals take to the streets and shout for their rights. Their sense of entitlement is offensive, and politicians in Washington who write legislation protecting them are saying to American young people that laws are to be broken and you will be rewarded if you do break the law.

"The American people have had enough. For me, the last insult was to see our National anthem being not only translated into Spanish, but having our words changed to serve someone else's interests. The anthem is sacred. Can you imagine if immigrants in France did the same thing with the French anthem? They probably would be shot.

"I urge you to protect our borders. Do whatever is needed to stop the invasion. Yes, we are a nation of immigrants, but the immigrants who built our Nation came here legally. Furthermore, they came to give to this country. They learned the language, followed the laws and were assimilated into the United States. The people who are coming now want to change the country. To begin with, they don't even learn the language.

"In 2004, I had to go to the emergency room at a local hospital. I was there 7½ hours because the waiting room was full of illegals who, according to the law, have to be taken care of. I pay taxes, they don't. Where are my rights? The civil rights of American people are being violated to protect illegals.

"To the politicians who say we are a generous people who should help those who come here looking for a better way of life, I say, well, where does that end? The Mexicans are no more deserving than other people. What about the Africans, the Haitians and all other nationalities? Should we open our borders to accommodate the whole world? If those folks want a let better life, let them demonstrate against the Mexican government and fight for their rights in their own country. Otherwise, if we make an exception for them, then in the name of fairness we will have to do it for all nations. What I see now on the borders is anarchy."

Lastly, Milton Chance of Nederland, Texas, briefly states: "I am against illegal immigration. We need to secure the borders. My son-in-law is Mexican and I have two wonderful grandchildren so I am not prejudiced at all. This statement by a former President of the United States sums up the way I feel. 'In the first place, we should insist that an immigrant who comes here in good faith and becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated with the exact equality as

everyone else. It is an outrage to discriminate against any person because of creed, or birthplace, or origin. But this is predicated upon the person's becoming in every facet an American and nothing but an American. There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is an American but does something else isn't an American at all. We have room but for one flag, the American flag. We have room but for one language, and that is the English language. We have room for but one sole loyalty, and that is the loyalty to the American people." Signed Teddy Roosevelt, 1907.

Mr. Speaker, I hope Congress is listening to the people of this country. And that's just the way it is.

ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL TRADE AGREEMENTS DON'T WORK

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. MICHAUD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MICHAUD. Mr. Speaker, does anyone here or watching at home wear one-size-fits-all clothing? It never fits right. It never looks good. What works for one person doesn't work for another. When it comes to trade agreements, a one-size-fits-all approach does not work either.

So then why are we negotiating trade agreements that take a one-size-fits-all approach to very different countries? Electronic comparison of the labor chapter in CAFTA versus the same chapter in Oman and Peru FTAs shows that Peru's FTA text is word-for-word identical to CAFTA. The Oman text contains only four syntax changes that do not alter the underlying meaning.

The labor chapter simply requires that each country enforce its existing labor laws. It does nothing to require countries to improve their laws to reflect fairness to working people.

There are also no safeguards in the agreement to prevent countries from weakening their labor laws. This is the same failed CAFTA approach: Squeeze it into one-size-fits-all clothing and slap it on to two different countries, Peru and Oman.

In Peru, the United States State Department has indicated that child labor remains a serious problem. It is estimated that 2.3 million children between the ages of 6 and 17-years-old are engaged in work. In Oman, the revised 2003 law remains in serious violation of the International Labor Organization's most important and fundamental rights, the freedom of association and the right to organize and bargain collectively.

The Sultan of Oman allows for no independent unions in the country. Whatever worker representative committees exist in the country, they are also subject to the government's approval. Such committees may not discuss wages, hours or conditions of employment. Needless to say, these are flawed agreements. They borrow weak

labor rules from CAFTA and apply them to the countries that are in dire need of better labor standards for their workers. They do nothing to improve the lives of the work or the working conditions of these people. And, make no mistake, what is bad for them is also bad for us here in the United States.

Any vote for the Oman or Peru FTA must take into account the broader economic reality that we are facing here today. Our trade deficit hit a record shattering \$726 billion last year. We have lost more than 3 million manufacturing jobs since 1998. Average wages have not kept pace with inflation this year, despite healthy productivity growth. The number of people in poverty continues to grow, and the real median family income continues to fall.

Offshore outsourcing for white collar jobs is increasingly impacting highly educated, highly skilled workers. RECORD trade and budget deficits, unsustainable levels of consumer debt, stagnant wages, all paint a picture of an economy living beyond its means, dangerously unstable in a volatile global environment.

These trade deals are not working for us. They aren't working for this country or for the countries we trade with either.

I urge all Members of the House to send our new United States Trade Representative an important message: All future agreements must make a real departure from a failed NAFTA and CAFTA model in order to succeed.

American workers are willing to support increased trade if the rules that govern are fair, if they stimulate growth, create jobs and protect fundamental rights, both in America and abroad. I am committed to fighting for better trade policies that benefit U.S. workers and the U.S. economy as a whole.

We simply cannot afford more of the same, one-size-fits-all clothing, because what you will get is a wolf in sheep's clothing.

THE PROBLEM OF AMERICANS WITHOUT HEALTH INSURANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight to raise awareness of a problem that is plaguing our health care system, and that is the number of uninsured Americans. It has been estimated that more than 45 million lack health insurance. However, it is important for us to understand better who the individuals are that make up that 45 million.

A census taken in 2003 reveals that almost one-third of the uninsured, 15 million, live in households with annual incomes above \$50,000. 7.6 million of these individuals live in households with incomes of more than \$75,000.

Moreover, Mr. Speaker, 18 million of the uninsured are between the ages of 18 and 34.

Obviously, many of these are uninsured as a matter of choice. They choose not to have coverage, because health insurance in this country is prohibitively expensive and it is not a purchase they wish to make, either because they are young and healthy or because they are willing to roll the dice and take their chances, or, if their employer cannot afford to offer insurance, the regulations on the individual insurance market make purchasing a policy on their own prohibitively expensive.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Republican leadership of this House has shown the American people how health care can be made more affordable in this country. There are three fundamental avenues that take significant steps toward allowing all Americans to be able to afford health insurance.

The first is Association Health Plans, or AHPs. The House of Representatives last year passed H.R. 525, the Small Business Health Fairness Act. This bill will reduce the cost of health benefits for small businesses and the self-employed by establishing new national Association Health Plans. AHPs currently exist, but they are severely hampered by the administrative burden and high costs of having to comply with 50 different sets of State insurance mandates and regulations. These barriers have made it virtually impossible to start new plans and have forced many of these plans to close, thus greatly limiting the availability of affordable health insurance to our small businessmen and women.

H.R. 525 will strengthen health insurance markets by creating greater competition and more choices of health plans for small businesses. Greater competition will benefit consumers by bringing premiums down and expanding access to coverage. The bill provides AHPs with the opportunity to offer fully insured health plan options under a uniform set of rules across State lines so it will actually expand opportunities for insurance companies to serve these small businesses.

□ 2145

Mr. Speaker, the second avenue that will allow more Americans to purchase health insurance are through health savings accounts.

They were established by the Medicare Modernization Act of 2003. Health savings accounts allow Americans to put aside tax-free dollars with a maximum annual contribution to pay for their health care needs.

These accounts are combined with high-deductible health insurance policies that cover both preventative services as well as catastrophic coverage; and these accounts, Mr. Speaker, grow with the miracle of compound interest.

In 2 years, over 3 million individuals have enrolled in HSAs; and the number of Americans projected to enroll by the

year 2010 increases to, get this, 29 million. In addition, more than one-third of HSA purchasers last year actually had incomes under \$50,000; and one-third of individual HSA purchasers last year were previously in the rolls of the uninsured.

In his State of the Union Address, President Bush announced his plans to build and expand upon those early successes by giving Americans who purchase HSAs the same tax advantage given to employer-sponsored health insurance plans. This is a huge boost for those Americans who are self-employed, unemployed, or they work for companies that do not offer health insurance. It levels the playing field and increases the number of individuals and families with coverage.

Mr. Speaker, the last solution of reducing the number of uninsured Americans is called community health centers. They are vital to enhance medical care in poor communities, where access to regular care is often hardest to come by and where basic primary and preventative services can do an enormous amount to raise standards of living and well-being.

With the support given by the Federal Government over the last several years, our community health centers now have capacity to serve more than 3.5 million additional Americans, with nearly 2 million more served in the next 2 years.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is not national health insurance that we need; and I think I heard one of my colleagues on the other side at the start of these 5 minutes describe that and recommend it. But, as can you see, the leadership in the House of Representatives, we take seriously our responsibility to allow all Americans to purchase health insurance. But our job is not done until all Americans enjoy the comfort and the security of health care insurance.

OMAN-PERU FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GOHMERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LINDA T. SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, a year ago in this body, we were talking about this Central American Free Trade Agreement or CAFTA's terrible labor provisions.

At that time, Member after Member raised serious concerns about CAFTA's failure to protect working people here in the United States and abroad. However, the Bush administration ignored every single one of those serious flaws with the CAFTA trade deal. Now the Bush administration is asking this House to consider the Oman and Peru Free Trade Agreements.

I would call it a new deal, except there is nothing new about it. I have looked at the labor provisions in the deal, Mr. Speaker, and they are identical to those in CAFTA. The adminis-

tration has changed nothing, absolutely nothing at all.

So, Mr. Speaker, again I need to say that there is a message we need to send to the President. The message is very simple: No on the CAFTA model, no to inadequate labor protections, and no to the Oman and Peru agreements.

If you want to protect workers' rights, if you stand for labor protection, if you want to halt job losses in this country, then say no to the CAFTA model, say no to inadequate labor protection, and say no to the Oman and Peru agreements.

The CAFTA model hurts hard-working people here in the United States, in Oman and in Peru. Not surprisingly, the Oman and Peru trade deals will hurt U.S. workers in the same industries that were alienated by CAFTA. It is not a surprise to anyone that I am talking about textiles and sugar production.

The labor standards in Oman and Peru are simply not acceptable. As recently as last year, the Bush administration's very own State Department publicly stated that Oman has an unacceptable standard for the trafficking of people into involuntary labor.

The same was formally acknowledged regarding Peru, including a special note that child labor was a serious problem there.

Honestly, I do not understand this administration. At the same time that the administration negotiated these agreements, it also published a report detailing the extensive labor problems in both of these countries. Even children working in a factory making bricks in Lima, Peru, do not have the legal right to, and I quote the administration's report, "remove themselves from potentially dangerous situations".

We need to say no to the Oman and Peru agreements, not just to protect our labor rights here in the United States but also, importantly, to set the global standard for labor rights around the world.

It was not so long ago that many in this House rejected and argued against CAFTA. Guess what? The arguments against the Oman and Peru agreements are the exact same ones, because it is the exact same agreement.

I ask my colleagues not to be fooled. Do not believe that this is a new approach for trade, because absolutely nothing has changed.

I, for one, am going to stand up again for labor rights here in the United States and abroad, and I encourage my colleagues to do the same.

HONORING JAMES CAVENDER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. POE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GOHMERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a great East Texas man who has realized the American dream the old-fashioned way, through a lifetime